

T H E
S O V E R E I G N T Y
O F
G R A C E;
O R,
G O D ' S

giving to every man severally as he will.

By R. RODDA.

The case of Lydia, *Acts*, xvi. 14. 15.
Of the Jailor, ver. 29. 30. 31.

*Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine
own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?*
Matt. xx. 15.

N E W C A S T L E:
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T H E
S O V E R E I G N T Y
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G R A C E.

TH E Operations of Grace upon the Soul are greatly diversified, and different persons have been brought to the knowledge of God, different ways. To tie the hands of Omnipotence to the particular experience of an individual, would be as unbecoming as to limit the Holy One of Israel. And yet this is an error too common among professors.

Too many there are that conclude, if persons are not brought to God in the same manner they have been themselves, they must certainly remain without hope, and without God in the world. I have seen many of these, *they* are objects of pity, but the narrowness of their sentiments, deserves to be treated with ~~the most~~ superlative contempt.

THE ways, means, and instruments used by unerring wisdom in bringing a sinner from darkness to light, ought never to be questioned, so the end be infallibly secured. God hath his way in the whirlwind, and his footsteps in the great deep. He hath power to do what he will with his own. If he diversify the manner of bringing his rational creatures to an acquaintance with himself, we have no right to arraign the divine conduct; his ways are always equal, agreeable to the fitness of things, and we are assured his thoughts concerning us are thoughts of peace and not of evil, that he may give to every one of us an expected end.

SOME men are suddenly convinced of sin; their fears are alarmed, their conscience awakened, their sins are set in order before them, they appear formidable as an armed host, they rage horribly, and threaten to draw on the heads of the guilty the vengeance of eternal fire. What refuge is left? What power to escape? Who can attempt to rescue these brands from everlasting burnings? Alas! vain is the help of man. All their hopes are swept away like the spider's web. Their hearts are pierced with penitential pains; they feel no rest in their bones by reason of sin: the arrows of God drink up their spirits and his hand presseth them fore. Many circumstances concur to aggravate their distress, they have sinned against many mercies, much

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light and love, against the convictions of conscience, the calls of God's word, and warnings of his spirit.

FROM this view of their past life they are ready to say like the men of Judah, "*there is no hope*". They feel such a mountain of guilt on their soul, that they are ready to sink under the pressure; and, if their mouth is not wholly shut, their language is, *Lord we are oppressed, undertake for us*. In that hour the Holy Spirit takes of the things of Christ and presents them to the view of their mind; the inner man beholds him set forth as evidently crucified and slain: they see the great atoning priest, and perfect sacrifice: they behold his obedience to death as fully commensurate to all the demands of Law and Justice. They see all their sins laid on the head of this spotless victim, and, as the LAMB of GOD he takes them all away. They behold him as the *only* Saviour, the all sufficient Saviour, as willing as able: every way suitable to the ^{case} ~~removal~~ of their misery, and essentially necessary to their present and eternal felicity. They believe: they feel him a present Saviour. They are changed in a moment. Their night is turned into day; their sorrow into joy. An hour ago, they were darkness, now they are light in the LORD. Before, they were miserable, now, they are truly happy. And very often this change is visible in the outward man, so true are the words of the Psalmist, "Thou art the *health* of my countenance, and my God."

THIS change is not produced by a long chain of reasoning, by laying down premises, and drawing conclusions from them. But it is instantaneous; it is the immediate result of looking unto JESUS. JESUS saith, Look unto me and be saved: the soul obeys, and can say, *mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

BUT we dare not say this is the *only* way that *re* GOD works, and there is no other; yet this is the way he in general works upon the most abandoned sinners, as far as we have yet made our observations.

IN the foregoing case the change is very apparent, the contrast is very striking. For notorious sinners to be changed into saints, for children of wrath and heirs of woe, to be changed into children of grace, and *made* ~~become~~ heirs of glory; causes the beholders to cry out *The Lord hath done great things for them: this is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.* But let us now consider a very different case; all that are in the favour of GOD have not been driven to such extremities. Some are sweetly allured; they are drawn with the cords of love. They heard not the thunders roll from Sinai's smoking mount, they saw not the tremendous lightning flash. perhaps, like Obadiah, they have feared the Lord from their youth, and have never wilfully and wickedly like others finned away their initial salvation; that free gift which (thro' the gracious promise of GOD) is come upon all men. Perhaps they have always retained a degree

degree of that light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world; tho' at times this may be greatly obscured; as ignorance the companion of depravity, is derived from our degenerate Root. Sometimes this vail is drawn aside, and they see a disconformity in their hearts and lives to the law of GOD, which is holy, and just, and good.

THIS discovery fills them with shame and a degree of confusion, yet they still remain strangers to any great degree of terror, or weight of condemnation. They earnestly pray that they may always see the beauty of holiness; and more closely copy after the shining example of the blessed JESUS. They feel in their hearts a love to the word, and people of God; and the deeper their acquaintance is with these, the more their love is increased. They have no desire to follow a multitude to do evil, they have no communion with the unfruitful works of darkness. They abhor evil practices, and detest evil desires and thoughts. If necessary business at times leads them into the company of irreligious men, they feel themselves out of their proper element; they cannot enjoy their company with any degree of complacency.

THEY wish their business transacted that they may speedily return to the ark of their rest. Their delight is with the Saints and them that excel in virtue. But ask these do you know your sins forgiven? Do you know you are justified by faith? Here they are at a loss for an answer.

They are fearful of saying any thing untrue. Fearful of deceiving themselves. 'Tis well if the enquirer (if brought to God in a different manner) do not speedily determine upon their case, and tell them roundly, you are not converted, you are in a state of damnation! Many, I fear, have very imprudently used this language to the great discouragement of some who have truly feared God and wrought righteousness, according to the degree of light they have received from him who giveth to every man ~~severally~~ as he will. For my part I think such as bear ~~the marks of the~~ foregoing character, should not be discouraged; for if a tree is known by its fruit, and living faith is proved by its works, and effects, it will be easily proved that such a man is accepted of God. Such a person by proper methods may certainly be taught the way of God more perfectly. ^{By} ~~explaining~~ ^{being explained to him} the various operations of grace, he will be led to compare them with his former feelings, and, on examination will easily perceive that divine goodness and mercy ~~has~~ followed him from infancy or childhood to the present day. He like Timothy, from a child knew the Holy Scripture that is able to make him wise unto salvation, and is a partaker of the like precious faith that dwelt in some of his pious progenitors. Thus God works differently upon different persons; but upon all, according to the counsel of his own will.

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OF this diversity, I shall produce two instances, and in doing this, I shall only speak what I know, and testify what I have seen.

IN a large manufacturing town near the centre of this Kingdom, lives a Gentleman respected by all who have the pleasure of knowing him. He was once an obdurate sinner, in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity; a champion for the prince of darkness. He neither feared God, nor regarded man. If implicit obedience to the god of this world is the infallible way to preferment in the realms of darkness, he certainly bade fair of having a more flaming throne than many of his deluded fellow mortals. His sins were of the deepest dye, and if God had delighted in his ruin, he might justly have consigned him to the lowest pit of perdition. Nothing less than an omnipotent action could snatch him from ruin; and this gracious wonder, God was pleas'd to shew. The right hand of the LORD arrests the flagrant rebel. Pay me what thou owest, was the language of justice, ten thousand talents are my demand, and nothing short of a discharge can rescue thee from the gloomy prison of wretchedness and everlasting despair. From thyself, or surety, I expect ample^e satisfaction; and horrors infernal must be the consequence of longer delay. Alas, the sinner hath nothing to pay. He hath no way to escape but by throwing himself at the feet of his supreme Judge; and wholly relying upon the merits of his pleading, powerful Advocate

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cate. His Advocate deeply interesteth himself in behalf of his client. He shews the cancelled bond, and demands a discharge ~~for his client~~; he produces a receipt in full for the uttermost farthing of the enormous debt; nor ceases his powerful plea until he obtains the prisoner's release. His wounds, his blood hath a voice so ardent, so pressing, so powerful, so prevalent, that the Father cannot turn away the presence of his Anointed. He proclaims a pardon from the imperial throne.

*His voice resounded thro' the arched heaven,
The debt is paid, the sinner is forgiven.*

This pardon is sealed upon the sinner's heart, he believes it, he feels it; God gives him the knowledge of it. He can tell you the time when, and place where, he was changed as in a moment. The Son of God made him free from guilt and condemnation; he felt his pardon attended with peace, love, and joy. In that hour he could rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. From that time he hath adorn'd the doctrines of the gospel by works of piety, mercy, and pure benevolence.

His substance hath greatly increased in the land, but he still counts all as dung and dross in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS his LORD. His Religion hath led him to the faithful discharge of all relative duties. Public, family, and closet duty is regularly kept up. He walks in all the ordinances of God blameless. In public charities he is found in
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the first rank; and is no less the widow's husband, and the orphan's friend. He hath often been the child of affliction, which he hath as often borne with the fortitude and patience of a man whose hope and heart is in heaven. Acute pains have caused the sweat to stream from every pore, amidst which a placid smile hath brightened his countenance, and his tongue hath at that time testified a hope full of immortality. *

SOME perhaps may say, "he is a young convert and in his first love", I believe he hath felt the happy change more than twenty years; I do not know that ever he lost his first love, nor can I see the necessity that any should who keep up constant watchfulness and prayer.

HE is the father of children, and as he hath received these from GOD, so he endeavours to train them up for him. If wholesome precepts, and a good example have any influence, these have not been wanting; nor have they been in vain. Tho' it must be allowed that all are by nature children of wrath, yet we must as readily grant, that bad example bears very hard upon the tender minds of children, and often leaves so deep an impression as is not easily erased. What a blessing to have a watchful parent ever ready to take and destroy those little foxes that spoil the vine!

THIS

* Since writing the above, my dear, honoured friend, is no more! He lived a holy life, died happy; and entered glory in triumph.

Lord, let my life, and death, be like his!

THIS Christian father had a son, the tender affection he had for this child, induced him to begin betimes to cultivate his mind, and to instruct him in the ways of GOD—It was his earnest desire, that “his son’s riper years should not upbraid his green.”

THE son from a child feared the LORD, and felt the secret drawings of his grace; he was early brought under the sound of the Word, to which as he grew up he appeared to have an encreasing love. The son under the tuition of his christian parent, has steered clear of those rocks and shelves upon which thousands have been fatally shipwrecked. He shuns the path of the destroyer. He contracts an esteem for the best books, the best manners, the best men. His behaviour is polite without ostentation; he is affable and courteous to all. He loves all men, but good men *only* with delight. He professes to love GOD, and that he feels the influences of his holy Spirit. In benificence he treads in the steps of his honoured Father; he does good to all, especially to them that are of the household of faith. His benevolence is

“*Within no narrow party banks confin’d,*

“*But open and enlarg’d to all mankind.*”

But alas! he cannot tell the time when, and place where GOD forgave him his sins. He appears to be a stranger to instantaneous conversion; both himself and his father are concerned about it. The young man in a letter lately wrote to

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his father, after professing much filial affection, which I verily believe flowed from a dutiful heart; after professing his confidence in God, and the precious refreshing seasons he daily receives from the divine presence,—he adds “but I cannot yet say with my Father, that I know the time when God forgave me all my sins, but I believe I enjoy his favour.” *

Now can we suppose such a man as this, a child of wrath, an heir of death and hell? No, I believe him to be a child of God; and that God will own him as such in that day when he shall number up his Jewels, and will spare him as a father spareth his son that serveth him. ✕

From what has been said, how careful should we be in determining on the state, or pronouncing the doom of any man; unless we saw him living in open sin, or wrapping himself in the filthy rags of self righteousness. In such cases the Holy Scripture is express, *The wicked shall be turned into hell with all the people that forget God. The unrighteous shall not inherit his kingdom.*

SOME I have known drawn with cords of love until they received a knowledge that God was reconciled, who have afterwards felt their hearts deeply affected. They have felt

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* He has since received such an assurance of God's love, as banishes every doubt of his being accepted thro' the beloved.

Reader if thou art waiting for the consolation of Israel, thine eyes shall see, and thy soul feel the salvation of God.

think he should be pressed to plead the promise of the Witnessing Spirit

- "The godly grief, the pleasing smart,
 "The meltings of a broken heart;
 "The tears that shew their sins forgiven,
 "The sighs that waft their souls to heaven."

In whatever manner they have been brought to God if they live righteous, sober, and godly lives, we have just reason to conclude the work is genuine.

In natural births the delivery is easier in some cases than in others. I believe it will hold good in the spiritual, *before Zion travailed she brought forth.* If a child is brought into the world with less pain in some instances than in others, he is not to be ^{convinced} ~~bal-~~ tardized on that account, or to be considered as an untimely birth. I never knew children by nature quarrel with one another about this, or refuse to own one another as brethren: why then should children of grace? Why should any eye be evil because God is good? *There are diversities of operations but it is the same God that worketh all in all. Cor. 12.6.*

And as the manner is greatly different, so are the means. Some by searching the volume of nature are almost imperceptibly led up to the knowledge of nature's God. These mighty works declare the Omnipotent power, infinite wisdom, and ineffable goodness of the divine Architect. The great eye and soul of the universe, whose glance dispels the shades, whose beams afford light for the performance of the actions of natural and civil life; whose warmth revives and raises nature from her temporary rest; is only a faint emblem of the great father of lights, in whom we live, and move, and have our being; of that uncreated Sun of righteousness, who

who arose on the nations with healing in his wings. The Moon walking in her borrowed brightness is an emblem of the Church clothed with the sun and having all sublunary things under her feet.

"Sun and Moon so wide display,

"Chant their makers praise so loud ;

"Pour insufferable day,

"And draw me up to God."

How sweetly was the royal Philosopher drawn from these effects to the grand cause that produced them, when I consider thy heavens, the moon and the stars the work of thy fingers ; *Lord what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him ?*

By contemplating the works of the great creator, many are filled with wonder and admiration, and often ere they are aware fall in love with wisdom's ways. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the whole earth is full of his goodness. He fills the immensity of space, and all our bodily organs are capable of transmitting divine impressions to the heart. May we see him in every thing ; hear him ~~in all sound~~ whether his voice shakes the earth, or silently whispers, *I am God.*

The dispensations of providence are another means of bringing sinners to God. These are greatly variegated, and whether they are prosperous or adverse ; under the divine blessing they may accomplish the same end : as the extremities of a thing meet in the centre. How often hath God by a seeming frown terrified the thoughtless into a consideration of their ways, and caused them to cry

out, we have sinned, what shall we do unto thee O thou preserver of men? By this dispensation he gives them a consciousness of their brittleness and vanity; shewing that all support without his arm, is weaker than the staff of a broken reed. He gives them to see earthly comforts all are vain, and were never designed to satisfy the desire of an immortal spirit. He blasts the promising crop, to open the eyes of the industrious husbandman, that he may see the plentiful harvest doth not so much depend upon his care and industry, as on the divine blessing. In vain does Paul plant, and Apollos water if God give not the increase. He lops off the green boughs, that the trunk may be alarmed at the threatening axe, which is ^{up}lifted and ready to be laid at the root of the evil tree.

A fruitful land maketh he barren for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. He threatens to sweep a sinful nation with the besom of destruction, that its inhabitants may no longer regard, or retain evil in their hearts. He awfully threatens to remove the candlestick, unless Laodicean professors repent, and let their light shine. He chastens Man for sin, and makes his beauty consume away; that he may see, and earnestly covet after the beauty of holiness. He wounds in order to heal; and kills in order to make alive. Tho' these dispensations are painful, yet, they are salutary: if the design is answered it justifies the ways of God with men; if not, his gracious designs are justified; as he blasts only to bless, and chastises only to reform and amend. He administers ~~physical~~, or permits

permits natural evil, only to remove, or destroy the moral evil of sin.

His design is the same when he causes the sun of prosperity to shine upon their tabernacle; these streams are designed to lead to the fountain; these gifts to the bountiful giver: He loads them with benefits to excite their gratitude, and induce them to stretch forth a hand of benificence to the poor and needy. He is merciful and good to them, that they may be so to others. ^{our- selves} If we consider ourselves as stewards only, we shall apply to the different branches of duty, to the faithful discharge of the great trust reposed in us, that when called to an account, we may welcome the day of reckoning; and according to the number of talents committed to our care, be ready to say, *Lord, thy pound hath gained five, or ten pounds.*

THE man that daily balances his accounts, and investigates the truth of things; will have but little to do at the end of his probation, but have them overlooked and approved by his great Master.

Sometimes these dispensations are *chequered*, but the GOD of providence hath still the same invariable end in view. If the subject is led to see the hand divine in his wise procedure, he will in all these vicissitudes cry out; *The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.*

As in natural things, physic, is preparative for the comforting cordial; and probing a wound makes way for its receiving the healing balm; so in spiritual. The summer of prosperity is never more welcome than when it succeeds the winter of adversity. The blessing of health is most cordially

received, and most fully enjoyed by those who have long been the children of affliction. It is the same hand that changeth the times and seasons, and with the same view; his own glory, and his creatures good. In his wise and powerful hand, the most trivial occurrence can produce the most permanent and lasting good. A poor Negro in America cuts down a tree, as it falls, God speaks to the heart of his obdurate master, "*As the tree falls so it lies.*" It is enough, his mind is deeply imprest, he yields to the impression, and becomes a new man. His soul is transformed in all her powers, he becomes a tree of righteousness, and brings forth fruit in due season. Another in his perambulations comes near the hut of one of his slaves; a sound from within salutes his ear, he draws nearer and is all attention; he hears the voice of prayer mix'd with praise. His poor negro blesses God, that in his state of bondage, the Gospel hath reached his ears, and Christ is revealed in his heart: he praises God for his food tho' of the coarsest kind. The master is suddenly struck, his consideration awakes. Here, said he, is my poor slave blessing God for the meanest diet; and I who have all the superfluities of life never blest God for any of them. The impression is deep and lasting; God gives him another heart, and he leads a new life.

But in bringing sinners to God, the grand *mean* is the *Book of Revelation*. Here the will of God is clearly set forth; life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel; and tho' we admit that the Gospel was preached before the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh, yet that was only a

glimmering ray; a light shining in a dark place, tho' a sure word of Prophecy to all who believed in the light, and waited for the salvation of God. The œconomy of grace before the law was like the chearful dawn of the morning. The morning star transmitted its rays to those who lay in that night of sin and misery, which the first offenders brought upon themselves and posterity. The œconomy of *their* grace under the Law tho' much beclouded with types and shadows had some light in it; God designed it like the lesser light, to rule the night until the day broke and the shadows fled away. Then the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings. Then the mystery hid from ages and generations, was made manifest to the saints. By *reading, hearing, and meditating* on the scriptures, thousands, myriads, have been brought to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. The sword of the spirit is quick and powerful, quickening the dead; and proving the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe. In renewing the heart, and reforming the life the Law and Gospel have their use. The Law wounds, the Gospel heals. The Law gives us to feel our malady, the Gospel reaches forth the infallible remedy. The Law holds forth the attributes of justice, truth, and holiness; the Gospel gives a rich display of the mercy, goodness, and love of God. The Law is our school-master to bring us to Christ, the Gospel humbles us at his feet and makes us all attention to his gracious instructions. Both are to be insisted on in their proper places. The Law and the Prophets testify of Christ, and the Gospel

proves that their testimony is true. Tho' Christ is the end of the ceremonial law, yet the moral Law which is a transcript of the divine mind, and a perfect rule for our ~~faith and~~ practice, abideth forever. While the oracles of God have been announced, thousands have been pricked to the heart, have yielded to the force of conviction, and presented themselves at the foot of the cross. The voice of the Lord strong and mighty, shakes the wilderness of nature, and turns the desert into a fruitful field.

Awful threatenings, motives of fear, often begin the work; the wrath of God, the damnation of hell, the never dying worm; and fire unquenchable: are frequently useful to awaken the dead in sin; and quicken their escape from everlasting burnings. The kind expostulations, and loving invitations, so often occurring in the sacred canon of Scripture, have a tendency to soften and melt the most obdurate heart: these gently steal into the affections, and sometimes as imperceptibly, as water into the bowels, or oil into the bones. If the infidel is reclaimed, it matters little whether he hath been driven by terror, or drawn by love.

'Tis not improbable but there may be as great a diversity in the *instruments* God generally uses, as there is in the *ways* and *means*. The head of the church hath greatly diversified ministerial qualifications; but an infinitely wise design runs thro' the whole. Little good is to be expected from those who are called of *men only*, to this great work. If God declare; *I never sent them*; they are never likely to profit his people. If they have been put

into the priests office for a piece of bread; or by the spoils of the flock to increase wealth, or aggrandize their families: to eat the fat and drink the sweet, no good is to be looked for. We let these alone; to their own master they stand or fall. But what an amazing difference among those whom GOD uses.

Some are possess'd of good natural abilities, a clear understanding, a sound Judgment, a retentive memory; some have added to this, a good delivery, a clear harmonious voice, attended with graceful action. Some imitate the cool reasoning of Cicero, others the warm persuasion of Demosthenes. Some are distinct in their sentences, giving the hearers proper time to collect the meaning of what has been said. Others are quite rapid, pouring forth a torrent of eloquence that threatens to bear down all before it. Some like Apollos are mighty in the scriptures; as wise scribes they bring forth out of their treasury things new and old. Others deal more largely in christian experience, their words come warm from the heart, they speak that which they know and feel; having tasted of the good word of GOD, and felt the power of the world to come, Some are Boanergeses, sons of thunder; others are Barnabases, sons of consolation. Some have a peculiar talent for awakening the sleepy sinner; others for administering consolation to them that mourn: and yet others there are, who appear to be more adapted for building up believers in their most holy faith.

All these have their use in the church; and the head cannot say to the feet, *I have no need of you.*

Persons of different branches in architecture contribute their quotas towards building a stately edifice, yet all unite in the same design. Some are in the mountain hewing the unpolished stone, or at the pits tempering and moulding the passive clay; or at the kiln burning or hardening the brick: others are collecting the scattered materials, while yet others, as wise master builders, are laying the foundation, or rearing up the superstructure. Hewing of wood, and drawing of water for the service of the tabernacle, were neither idle, nor useless employments. The God of order, appoints all to the different stations they fill with the same wise design. Those who open the doors, and trim the lamps belonging to the house of God, are far more honourably employ'd, than those who have the highest appointments in the tents of ungodliness. If one man is more eminent for ministerial gifts than another, he ought to be the deeper humbled; who hath made the difference? Or what can he boast of which he hath not received? But his superior gifts do not argue superior grace, nor even superior usefulness. Silver trumpets blown with judgment, may be harmonious to the ear, and may gain the performer some applause; if this is all, 'tis a poor reward. Rams horns blown at God's command will level the walls of Jericho devoted to destruction. Breaking the Pitchers, holding the lamps, and sounding *the sword of the Lord and of Gideon*, will be sufficient to destroy the Midianites. Therefore, let not the wise glory in his wisdom, or the strong glory in his strength; but let him glory in me saith the Lord, who doeth all

these things. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he ordains strength; and thro' the foolishness of preaching, he is pleased to save them that believe.

But some will say, how can men destitute of a liberal education expect to be of any use in the church? Let an Apostle answer, *Where is the scribe? Where is the the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? Hath not God chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty? And the base things of the world hath God chosen; yea and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence. No man should take this office upon himself but he that is called of God.* Heb. v. 4. But if God is pleased to take the first king of Israel, out of the last and least tribe, and out of the meanest family in that tribe; who shall say unto him what doest thou. ^ ?

He took David when following the ewes great with young, and set him to feed his people Israel. If Elisha is called of God by the mouth of Elijah to the prophetic office, he leaves his husbandry, and enters upon his new employ. If God puts a word in the mouth of Amos, he will leave the herds-men of Tekoah and his gathering Sycamore fruit, and become a Prophet to the house of Israel. If the harvest is plenteous, and the faithful labourers few; who will blame the Lord of the harvest (who saith all souls are mine) for making choice of *Fishermen, Tax-gatherers, and Tent-Makers*, to go out into the highways and hedges, into the lanes and streets of the city and gather in the outcasts.

What a mercy that the poor have the Gospel preached unto them / what divine goodness that he enables the *poor* to preach the Gospel. Let facts testify for the last half century, who have been most useful in their day, the worldly wise, or those who in some respects are unlettered, but have been with, and received their mission from the Lord Jesus? Let clouds of witnesses say, under whose ministry they first received a knowledge of themselves, and what is still better, a knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.

From what has been said, let us admire that divine wisdom and goodness, that always proposes the best end, and makes choice of the best means to secure it. Let us own his hand in all the operations of grace upon the hearts of men, and say, *this hath God wrought*. May his works of *nature, providence, and grace*, inflame our hearts, excite our humble gratitude, and fill our minds with becoming thoughts of his majesty, and goodness.

Let us bless him, for such instruments as he is pleased to use; and say, Blessed are ye who come in the name of the Lord. May your loins be girded with truth. May your lamps always burn, and your light ever shine: so shall ye teach transgressors his ways, and sinners shall be converted unto God. And when your labours and sufferings are ended below; Angels shall conduct you to the palace of the Great King, where you shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.

Even so, LORD JESUS! Amen!